

**KENTUCKY BOARD OF EDUCATION RETREAT  
REGULAR MEETING  
MAY 9-10, 2007**

**HOLIDAY INN UNIVERSITY PLAZA  
1021 WILKINSON TRACE  
BOWLING GREEN, KENTUCKY**

***SUMMARY MINUTES***

The Kentucky Board of Education held its regular annual retreat meeting on May 9-10, 2007, in Ballroom B of the Holiday Inn University Plaza in Bowling Green, Kentucky. The Board conducted the following business:

**Wednesday, May 9, 2007**

***CALL TO ORDER***

Chair Keith Travis called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. local time and asked that all cell phones be turned off or muted. He asked for the roll to be called.

***ROLL CALL***

Present for the meeting were C.B. Akins, Kaye Baird, Joe Brothers, Jeanne Ferguson, Bonnie Lash Freeman, Judy Gibbons, David Rhodes, Keith Travis, Janna Vice and David Webb. Absent were Doug Hubbard and Tom Layzell.

***CLOSED SESSION ON PERSONNEL***

Chair Travis indicated that a closed session on personnel needed to be added to the agenda and asked for a motion to do so. Kaye Baird moved to add a closed session on personnel to the agenda and to immediately enter into the session. C.B. Akins seconded the motion and it carried. The closed session began at 10:10 a.m. Doug Hubbard participated via conference call phone in the closed session discussion.

Upon a motion made by Bonnie Lash Freeman and seconded by Kaye Baird that was unanimously approved, the Board came out of closed session at 1:45 p.m. local time. No action was taken during the closed session.

***CONSIDERATION OF A MOTION TO RATIFY THE EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT  
FOR THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION***

At this point, Bonnie Lash Freeman moved to ratify the employment contract for hiring Dr. Barbara Erwin as the next commissioner of education and Kaye Baird seconded the motion. Chair Travis asked for a roll call vote. All ten members present at the meeting voted yes and the motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Erwin was then asked by Chair Travis to make some comments. She indicated that she found it an honor, privilege and a pleasure to serve as the next commissioner of Kentucky. Erwin stated that she wants Kentucky to be the first state to meet proficiency by 2014.

A short recess was taken for Chair Travis and Dr. Erwin to speak with the press.

### ***PANEL OF EDUCATORS FOCUSED ON REACHING PROFICIENCY BY 2014***

Vice Chair Bonnie Lash Freeman facilitated the panel session and went through introductions of the following panel members:

#### ***Teachers***

Patrice McCrary, Cumberland Trace Elementary, Warren County; Karen Biliter, Phelps Elementary, Pike County; Billie Travis, Royal spring Middle Schools, Scott County; Ken Mattingly, Rockcastle County Middle School, Rockcastle County; Jeff Wright, Louisville Male High School, Jefferson County; and Jennifer Forgy, Paul Laurence Dunbar High School, Fayette County

#### ***Principal***

Ward Bushart, Graves County High School, Graves County School District

#### ***Superintendent***

Dale Brown, Warren County School District, Bowling Green, KY

#### ***Local Board of Education Member***

William (Bill) S. Lovell, McLean County Board of Education, McLean County School District

Panel members were asked to respond to the following three questions:

- Where do we stand currently in our journey to reach proficiency?
- What are the roadblocks that exist to reaching proficiency?
- Where do we need to go from here in order to reach proficiency?

Highlights of responses to the first question on "Where do we stand currently in our journey to reach proficiency?" included:

- We're going to make it!
- We will need better quality teacher staff and better curriculum.
- We have to look at each child individually.
- I think we will make it before 2014. School boards have changed their focus to student achievement being the number one priority. We are now a part of this along with the Kentucky Association of School Superintendents and Voluntary Partnership Assistance Teams.
- Reducing the achievement gap must be a priority.
- Those not learning to read in elementary fall farther and farther behind at middle and high school.

- Teachers need to be given additional time to help students catch up. The home must become involved so that lifelong learning becomes a part of the child's culture.

Highlights of responses to the second question on "What are the roadblocks that exist to reaching proficiency?" included:

- How we identify the roadblocks is a roadblock. We must know every student and have high expectations for "all". Ongoing professional development is critical.
- Gifted and talented students are not being able to soar because classrooms are Core Content driven, textbook bound and "pouring and storing" to do test prep.
- Teachers feel stressed to teach only what is on the test. Also, many teachers are retiring and we need to be recruiting to the teaching profession.
- Teachers need to understand the content to be taught and must assure that students have learning targets.
- We need to look at how we address student accountability. We cannot use one size fits all for all schools because schools have different populations. It is difficult to hit a moving target in terms of assessment.
- The current special education delivery model of inclusion is concerning.
- High school class caps are too high, with 29 to 30 in core classes.
- Under funded mandates cause difficulties. Districts must keep a 2% budget contingency, yet where do the dollars come from if we do not have it locally. That is the local board's biggest roadblock. Also, lack of buy-in from parent and the community when talking about a rigorous curriculum is problematic because the parents want their children to make good grades.
- Test results do not come back until the fall and the student is with a totally new teacher. Also, there is a lack of the arts in schools across the state and arts programs will make students critical thinkers.
- Schools get teachers who are not ready to be teachers and teachers who have no idea what they need to do with students. It takes about five years to get new teachers to where the district needs them to be.
- Some students cannot read in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade and it is difficult to take them farther.
- We must let the higher education institutions know what we need new teachers to be able to do when they graduate.

Highlights of responses to the third question on "Where do we need to go from here in order to reach proficiency?" included:

- We must raise expectations and focus on what and why students need to learn the information. Teachers must be supported to think about how content should be presented. Before new mandates by the legislature or KDE are put on teachers, they need to come and spend a day in the classroom.
- The assembly line needs to be stopped and students pulled off to fix what is needed immediately. Kids must not be passed along until they reach proficiency at the required level. The standards need to be shrunk going deeper and less broadly.
- Students must be held accountable.

- We must raise the bar, especially for the gifted and talented. Special education students must be lifted up as well. The core must be hit hard. A challenging senior year must be put into place with meaningful classes.
- Formative assessment must be ongoing every day for all students.
- We need a way to address schools that need a culture change.
- Superintendents should have more of a role in principal selection, especially in low-performing schools.
- High expectations need to be implemented at our middle schools indicating that every student will learn at high levels. Students must understand that nothing less than their best effort is acceptable.
- Access to AP classes must exist for every high school. Senior year credits must be examined.
- We are losing teachers because of the external add-ons. Some tasks need to be removed.
- Master teachers need to be available and paid to share their expertise.
- We must do away with the idea that when someone comes to your classroom that it is a threat and instead welcome assistance.

### ***REACTIONS BY LEGISLATIVE LEADERS ON THE PANELISTS' COMMENTS***

Senator Ken Winters responded to the panelists' comments with the following statements:

- Frank Rasche and I are fortunate to be here to hear what was said. We and the Board will benefit from your ideas.
- The issues facing us over the next few years include:
  - The need for longitudinal data
  - Not being able to read as the obstacle for success for many students
  - The need to get Read to Achieve into every school
  - Lack of parental involvement and some students with one or no parents
  - The need for schools and districts to go to the homes when they will not come to school
  - Meeting the needs of the individual child
- Kentucky is doing well but we still have far to go.
- No perfect test exists.
- We never intentionally give unfunded mandates. We are hearing that the dollars for teacher raises are not adequate because federal employees and vocational teachers are not included.
- We test too much and take too long to get the results back. Perhaps the vendor needs to be changed if the turnaround cannot be shortened.
- Teacher training is a critical area of need and we need to inspire young people to be teachers. Higher education folks must nurture and encourage young people interested in teaching. Teacher salary level is also an issue in whether young people choose to be teachers.
- A crisis exists in producing math and science teachers.
- The principal is the key to school improvement and must be enthusiastic and committed.
- Differential pay or market conditions pay will have to be considered in the future.

- If after a period of time, a school remains to be low-performing, perhaps school choice should be implemented.
- End of course exams may be a promising strategy.

Representative Frank Rasche responded to the panelists' comments with the following statements:

- We must focus on the kids and be reminded of this constantly.
- Testing seems to be somewhat of a diversion instead of a measure along the way. Even though testing is scary, it has been responsible for a lot of the progress Kentucky has made.
- We need to try to not let schooling get in the way of learning. We haven't figured out how to make what we want students to learn relevant to their lives. Learning must be challenging and exciting.
- In spite of all we are doing, we are still losing one in three students.
- We need to ask ourselves what a student should be like at age 25 and take a broader perspective. A way needs to be found to work with "a" child on setting individual goals for his/her education over the next ten years.
- Use of time is critical. Some legislators have a problem with the way current classroom time is used. We need to realize how precious the hours and minute are to teaching and learning.

### ***INTERACTION AMONG BOARD MEMBERS, LEGISLATORS AND PANELISTS ON REACHING PROFICIENCY BY 2014***

The following themes/statements were brought forward during the interaction phase:

- Partnerships are key in reaching proficiency.
- We need to figure out how to bring about rigor, relevance and relationships in the redesign of high schools. Smaller communities need to be found in high schools. Perhaps we need to look at Sarasota, Florida where students are choosing pathways.
- Teacher preparation faculty need to go back into the public schools for a year.
- Schools like the Lighthouse Academy are needed for students who need special situations. We have to look at how we teacher these kids and having a plan for each student.
- Perhaps the Kentucky Board of Education can each spend a day with a teacher while in Louisville in September.
- We need to be able to test and get results back to you immediately.
- We must deal with school choice and student mobility.
- Students disengaging after testing is not acceptable.
- Relationships must be established first before the rigor and relevance.
- We must make students more accountable for their learning.
- Students must learn as they go and reach mastery.
- Perhaps students should learn less but learn it better.
- Teachers must be adequately prepared with job-embedded professional development necessary for that preparation to occur.
- Parental support is absolutely critical.

- CATS cannot do it all.
- Analysis of data and review of student work is a key element to success.

Newly appointed commissioner, Barbara Erwin, then made the following comments:

- It is exciting to hear the dialogue between the panel, the Board and the legislators. This is the first time I have heard this type of interchange with this degree of diversity.
- You are preaching to the choir with me. Over a decade ago, the National Center for the Economy looked at high performing schools and here is what they found that needs to be examined:
  - Alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessment (not just summative)
  - A mile wide and inch deep curriculum problem
  - The need for students to know when their work is good enough
  - A system of professional development with more dollars needed in research and development and professional development
  - A continuous learning environment/communities
- It is exciting just to listen to the conversation. You can be assured that this is not occurring in all places. I applaud you and look forward to working with you.

At this time Chair Keith Travis thanked the panelists and legislators for participating and for their honesty. He said he wanted the partnerships started today to continue. Travis then announced that the Board would stand in recess until tomorrow morning and reminded everyone of the reception that would begin at 5:45 p.m. local time in Meeting Room 2.

### **Thursday, May 10, 2007**

#### ***INTRODUCING THE NEW COMMISSIONER TO THE STATE***

Interim Commissioner Kevin Noland noted that a handout was available in the meeting folder titled "Introducing Barbara Erwin to Kentucky" that he and Lisa Gross had prepared. He pointed out that she will be doing a keynote address at the Kentucky Association of School Administrators' conference on June 6. Noland stated that her official start date as commissioner will be July 16 and that plans are being made to introduce her to Kentucky Department of Education staff during her first week on the job. He also said that an Interim Joint Education Committee meeting is being held in Louisville on July 19 that could be added to the list and that opportunities to come to each Board member's area can be worked into the schedule. Noland emphasized that Dr. Erwin must do visits as they can be scheduled to meet legislative leadership.

Keith Travis then asked that Dr. Erwin speak to the Murray Rotary Club on July 12.

Mary Ann Miller reminded all members to include Jody Smith, Dr. Erwin's scheduler, on any requests for her to visit or attend meetings.

## ***WORKING TOGETHER AS A BOARD***

C.B. Akins then facilitated a discussion on teambuilding and referenced a handout titled "Teambuilding: Some Things to Consider and Discuss". The handout made the following points:

### What does it take to have a great team?

- We cannot be perfect people, but we can be a perfect team if we operate in our individual areas of strength. Remember, our character is more important than our IQ.
- The Stockdale Paradox says: Retain absolute faith that we can and will prevail in the end, regardless of the difficulties, AND at the same time confront the most brutal facts of our current reality, whatever they may be.
- We must know that everybody on the team will protect the integrity of the team! Trust is the foundation of team membership. Confidentiality is crucial and MUST be protected at all costs. Apply the "Vegas principle" to closed sessions.
- Loyalty has two components: First, it is giving the team our honest opinion whether team members like it or not; second, it means once the team makes a decision the entire team executes the decision as though it were his/her own.
- Each team member must be willing to do whatever the team needs us to do. Ask yourself if the team needs me to display or delay my emotions.
- Selfless promotion, where one wants to build up, is preferred over self-promotion, where one wants to move up.
- The one thing the top team cannot delegate is final responsibility.

### What happens when there is a leak on the team?

- When a leak does occur, do not panic, do not fear, and NEVER lose focus. Leaks will not prove fatal to our cause unless we lose focus and stop or delay our work. Extending work considered incomplete can be helpful.
- We must convey in our manner and bearing that the unpleasant issue is not going to cause us to draw away, yet we must acknowledge that we cannot move forward until we recognize and face our problem. If we don't face it, we can't fix it. We must name the problem before we will confront the problem.
- Fix the leak! How? Irritation-Confrontation-Cooperation-Collaboration-Cross-fertilization. Team members MUST be held accountable or it impugns the integrity of the entire team.
- Do not take personally a team member's desertion or failure to perform. Find a way to get the job done without him/her. Once you know a dog bites, do not pet that dog anymore.

### How do we move forward?

- We must acknowledge that the need for welcome cannot be underestimated at any age or any level of interaction between human beings.

- We must move forward with relationship building on our mind, not deal making! This includes the relationship between the board and KDE staff. Who should give directions to the staff?
- Many teams scatter their energy because they forget what business they are in. They try to take up battles that are not theirs. They try to be all things to all people, and thus lose their focus and meaning. Every team builder would be wise to remind the team daily what business they are really in.
- We must all make sure what we say, what we do, and what we say we do all match. Make the Video agree with the Audio.
- Leadership is seeing opportunity in tough times. Tension can be a good thing. Too much tension causes anxiety and stress. Too little tension causes apathy. God gives us just enough tension to develop us!
- Every team member has two buckets: one with water, one with gasoline. When we come upon a fire we get to choose which one we will toss on it.
- Employ the SQM method: Simplify, Quantify, and Multiply.
  - Simplify: Get to the essence of what we came here to do.
  - Quantify: Determine ways in which progress will be measured.
  - Multiply: Ensure that everyone on the team has the ability to multiply the good of the organization through every contact he/she makes.

Sources:        The 360 Degree Leader by John Maxwell  
                       Good to Great by Jim Collins  
                       Teach Your Team to Fish by Laurie Beth Jones  
                       From Burden to Blessing by C.B. Akins, Sr.

Chair Travis then asked that staff secure a copy of C.B. Akins' book for all Board members.

### ***REVIEW OF KBE MEETING DATES FOR 2007 AND 2008 AND CONSIDERATION OF MEETING DATES FOR 2009***

Chair Travis called members' attention to the meeting dates proposals for 2007, 2008 and 2009 that was part of their meeting packet and asked for any comments or suggested changes. He noted that at the September 5 meeting in Louisville each board member wants to shadow a teacher and/or student.

Judy Gibbons pointed out that the Business Summit of Northern Kentucky is being held on November 14 while the Board is in that area and they would like the Board to attend part of the agenda. She also said that a visit to Covington Holmes High School needs to be part of the trip to Northern Kentucky.

The Board indicated they wished to stay with the December 6-7, 2007, meeting date to avoid meeting on Hanukkah. Staff was asked to bring back the meeting dates to the June meeting for final approval.



Chair Travis brought up the graduation ceremonies at KSB and KSD and asked members to let Mary Ann Miller know who can attend. Jeanne Ferguson said she would be going to KSB and Travis stated he would be attending the ceremony at KSD.

Comments by several members were then made on various issues as follows:

- Improvement plans from Covington Holmes and the two Jefferson County schools need to have a date certain for completion.
- At the June meeting, the Board needs to drill down farther into the proficiency data, including data on subpopulations and KSB and KSD.
- It is concerning to test so late in the school year and not get results back immediately. Looking at different vendors was suggested. Staff replied that online testing is one solution to this issue. It was requested that this be discussed in August.
- Looking at what it would take to hold individual students accountable instead of schools was also a topic that was requested to be discussed in August.
- Concern was expressed over the way some schools are scheduling the two additional instructional days.
- Concern over the Core Content still being too broad was expressed. It was noted that to be successful the curriculum must be narrowed, students must learn as they go, tests must be used to help students and teachers move forward and a look must be taken at how to assist teachers and unburden them to teach.
- An update on the embedding of ACT was requested. Staff indicated this could be done in June or August.
- Constant dialogue is needed with higher education.
- We must focus on best practices. We cannot be all things to all people.

### ***REVIEW OF KBE POLICY MANUAL***

After a discussion of the second on page 3 of the Policy Manual titled "Agenda", staff was ask to amend the last sentence in that section to read: "The Commissioner shall be responsible for compiling agenda materials and providing them to each Board member at least seven (7) ~~ten (10)~~ days prior to any Board meeting with any exceptions to be approved by the Board chair. It was noted that the amended Policy Manual would be voted on at the June meeting.

### ***COMMENTS BY DR. BARBARA ERWIN***

Due to having to catch a plane, Dr. Erwin had to depart; thus, Chair Travis asked her to make comments before leaving.

Dr. Erwin stated that:

- She wanted to reiterate that she is glad to be part of the Commonwealth and what is happening here in education.
- In Illinois, we did not get test results back for a year.
- Formative versus summative assessment is a different concept on which we will work.

- I agree that we must change instead of doing what we have always done.
- C.B.'s comments are good advice for all levels of boards.
- I am hoping that the bumps in the road came early and am committed to doing everything I can to assure you that this board's choice has been the right one.

## ***KBE STRATEGIC PLAN AND SETTING OF NEXT YEAR'S PRIORITIES***

### History of Reform

Interim Commissioner Kevin Noland was asked to give a brief history of where Kentucky has come from in education beginning with education reform in the 1990s.

Noland stated that prior to the 1990s, Kentucky's education system was about process (bean counting mentality) with only norm-referenced tests given. He said that teachers went into the classroom, closed the door and were pretty much islands to themselves, teaching what they wanted. At this time, Noland noted, a majority of school districts filed a lawsuit to challenge equity of funding because they wanted more dollars. He felt these districts got more than they bargained for because not only did the court rule the funding not to be equitable but it threw out all statutes related to education and ordered the General Assembly to come up with a fair and equitable system. Noland indicated that the General Assembly formed committees in the area of finance, curriculum and governance. He reported that Bonnie Brinly and he were there during this time and it looked like for awhile that nothing would happen; however, he said that in one meeting, the pieces came together and staff had two weeks to draft a 900-page bill. Interim Commissioner Noland commented that the legislature did put into the bill what research showed to be effective. He stated that many thought it would go away but it has not.

Noland went on to say that the bill did cause a large infusion of dollars over the first two years. He indicated that turf battles developed in some areas and that folks learned that major changes take time to be internalized. The interim commissioner explained that the theory used within the reform act was that the ones closest to the student know best how to serve the child and the state then just holds the districts and schools accountable for results.

In regard to assessment, Noland said, the tests were to be designed to show what students can do, not just the ability to regurgitate facts. He reported that the initial test was called KIRIS and noted that in 1998, it became CATS. The transition from one system to the other, he stated, was accomplished through an interim accountability system. The difference in Kentucky's assessment from others in the nation, Noland observed, is that it has been sustainable and not thrown out by a governor every four years when administrations change.

Interim Commissioner Noland moved on to explain that no magic formula exists for getting to proficiency by 2014 and emphasized that lots of tools are needed in educators' toolboxes. He stated that initial buy-in came from teacher leaders getting results; now, he indicated, the issue is quality of implementation and delivering what is needed by each

student. Noland felt that the department's job is to spread best practices and training on the quality of implementation; however, he emphasized that the department and board cannot do it alone. He explained that in the 1990s, the department had 900 employees and pointed out that now it has 660. Noland compared the department to a small district and commented that as much as the staff wants to do direct service to everyone, it is not practical. He stated that the department's role is about building capacity in local school districts.

Joe Brothers asked if any such history of reform is written down anywhere. Noland said he could capture the above comments in writing for the Board.

Chair Travis noted that the Prichard Committee had produced a book on the history of reform and asked staff to check on getting copies for the members.

### Strategic Plan

Deputy Commissioner Linda France commented that we need to continue to build on the original vision of reform. She stated that we need to agree on what proficiency means and on a meaning for "prepared for success". France pointed out that in the meeting packet, staff sent Board members a data report on the status of objectives using the performance indicators that were available but said that for the new objectives that were added last fall, indicators had not been established.

Through a PowerPoint presentation, France highlighted the following:

- The KBE strategic plan has three major goals (High Student Performance, High Quality Teaching and Administration and Strong and Supportive Environment for Each School and Every Child) with objectives under each.
- KBE Priorities for 2005 were:
  - Early Childhood
  - Literacy
  - The Secondary Agenda
  - Closing the Achievement Gap
  - School and Teacher Leadership
- Standards and Indicators for School Improvement
  - Standard 1: Curriculum
  - Standard 2: Assessment
  - **Standard 3: Instruction**
  - **Standard 4: School Culture**
  - Standard 5: Student, Family and Community Support
  - **Standard 6: Professional Growth, Development and Evaluation**
  - **Standard 7: Leadership**
  - Standard 8: Organizational Structure and Resources
  - Standard 9: Comprehensive and Effective Planning

(France commented that CATS cannot do everything and that formative assessments must be implemented. She emphasized the need to have a sharper focus on instruction and leave less to chance. Ms. France noted that great tools

for making improvements exist and the issue is how to get these in the right hands. She went on to say that school culture must be brought to the forefront and that professional development and leadership are key as we move forward. France recommended more emphasis on the bolded standards in the future.)

- What do we know about the places that are improving results?
- High Performing Schools/Districts:
  - Have clear and specific goals for what students should learn in every grade, including the order in which they should learn it;
  - Provide teachers with common curriculum, assignments;
  - Assess students to measure progress toward learning goals; Act immediately on the results of those assessments.
- Recommend that KDE place a tremendous focus on the instructional core:
  - What do students need to learn?
  - How will they learn it?
  - How will we know they've learned it?
  - What will we do if they don't learn it?
  - What will we do if they already know it?(All of this is in the context of balanced assessments for learning, instructional resources and professional learning communities.)

At this point, staff was asked to get the Board details on the training to be held for teacher leaders in Jefferson County on June 7-8.

Other comments from Board members included:

- We may need to insist on some of these recommendations in low-performing schools.
- We need to get our partners to assist in getting models for school culture out.
- One of the challenges we face is getting schools to acquire best practices.
- We must create an environment for success.

Deputy Commissioner France then asked if the 2005 priority areas are still ones that the Board wants to emphasize.

Chair Travis responded that the Board needs the new commissioner's perspective on this perhaps at the July meeting.

### ***ADJOURNMENT***

David Rhodes moved to adjourn the meeting and Joe Brothers seconded the motion. The motion carried.